

Malden Historic District
(J. Q. Dickinson & Company Office Building)
Malden
Kanawha County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-210-40

HABS
WVA,
20-MALD,
41-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MALDEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, J. Q. Dickinson
& Company Office Building

HABS No. WV-210-40

Location: At the southernmost end of Malden, approximately 1/3 mile southwest of the end of Malden Drive, Malden, Kanawha County, West Virginia
(Within the boundaries of the Malden Historic District)

Present Owner: Mrs. Turner Ratrie (Mary Price Ratrie)

Present Use: Office building and storage area.

Significance: Dating from the last decades of the nineteenth century, the building housed the company store for one of the principal saltworks in the Malden area until the store ceased operations in 1962. The northern portion of the building is still used as an office, the only functioning administrative remnant of the once-thriving salt industry in the immediate region, the output of the company being now limited to industrial bromides. The building is rated by the National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form as making a major contribution to the Malden Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Undetermined -- late nineteenth century.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Originally, all of the property, now designated as the Turner Ratrie estate, was owned by the Dickinson family. The property has never been sold, conveyed, or willed to anyone other than family members since its acquisition.
4. Alterations and additions: None except minor repairs, and repainting, always in essentially the same gray color.

B. Historical Context:

Still used as an office on the Ratrie estate, the late nineteenth-century building originally served as both office and company store for the John Q. Dickinson & Company salt-making enterprise founded in the early 1800s.

Prepared by Donna Sue White
Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey Team
June 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This large astylar T-shaped story-and-a-half gable-roofed clapboarded frame structure is similar in its simplicity of construction and detailing to the barns and storage buildings immediately surrounding it.
2. Condition of fabric: Maintained with moderate care.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This building is approximately 83'-7" across its entrance front and 30'-2" in depth. It is composed of a 1-1/2 story main block of office space to which a one-story wing is attached. The one-story wing, now used as a storage area, formerly served as a company store.
2. Foundations: Foundations are of poured-in-place concrete.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Walls are of wood sheathed in clapboard siding, clapboard widths averaging 4-1/2". All of the exterior walls and trim are painted gray.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Cast concrete steps occur at three door locations around the building.
5. Chimneys: One chimney occurs atop the 1-1/2 story office block. It is banded by three rows of corbelled bricks near the top.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The primary entrance occurs on the east wall toward the north end of the one-story wing. A second entry occurs on the west wall. South of the primary entrance is a larger door serving formerly as an entrance to the company store. All doors appear to have been of vertical planks braced on the inside face, though the primary entrance door has been replaced by a flush solid wooden door.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are generally double-hung one-over-one wooden sash units occurring singly or, more often, in pairs. In a few instances, sashes having six lights have been used, usually as fixed sashes.

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7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a collection of gabled structures - two major ones atop the 1-1/2 story block and the one-story wing, plus one minor gable on each face of the former. The more southerly of these minor gabled roofs covers the stairwell leading to the attic spaces. The roof is covered in green asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Eaves occur at all exterior walls, the undersides of each being enclosed by smooth soffits. Fascias and bargeboards are plain wooden planks.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Atop the south face of the office block gable, the gabled roof covering the stairwell has the general appearance of a dormer.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The main floor contains office space to the north in the main block, this office area being separated from the company store/storage area by an entrance/stair vestibule spanning the south wing in an east/west direction. A private office and a vault are located at the north side of the office area.
2. Stairways: A single stairway located in the entrance vestibule connects the main floor and the attic.
3. Flooring: Flooring throughout is of wooden planking.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls in the entrance vestibule and company store areas are finished in painted plaster. Walls in the office block have a wooden wainscot of narrow vertical beaded boards, above which the walls are surfaced in painted mineral board. The mineral board is divided into approximately two-foot widths by wooden strips at each vertical seam between panels.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors in the office area are wooden panel doors, except for the steel vault door. Doors in the south wing are of vertical planking.
6. Cabinet work: The company store/storage area in the south wing contains shelving along all four walls.
7. Mechanical equipment: The building contains no plumbing. Lighting is electric and heating occurs only in the office area, where a gas space heater occurs in front of a former fireplace. Originally, both private and outer offices were heated by back-to-back fireplaces framed by brick mantelpieces.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The building faces east onto a private road just south of Malden along the Kanawha River. It occurs within a collection of outbuildings attendant to a large private residence maintained by the owner of this office building, the residence being immediately north of it.
2. Historic landscape design: The estate on which this building is located is owned by one of the descendants of the original developers of salt deposits which made the Kanawha Valley prosperous. A few remnants of this chemical industry remain in the form of several outbuildings producing bromides for photographic use.
3. Outbuildings: The buildings immediately surrounding the structure are dependencies of the adjacent residence, including a stable and a large barn. Down the road to the south are several buildings related to the production of sodium bromide and potassium bromide, the function for which the office building is still maintained.

Prepared by James Murray Howard
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
July 1979

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. State Tax Map, Kanawha County Courthouse, Charleston, West Virginia.

Interviews:

Mrs. Turner (Mary Price) Ratrie, Ratrie Estate, Malden, West Virginia. (Present owner of building)
Llewellyn and Martha Cole.
110 Georges Drive, Malden, West Virginia

Prepared by Donna Sue White
Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey Team
June 1979

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) with funding from the West Virginia Department of Culture and History. The recording was completed under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect of HABS, in the HABS field office in Charleston, West Virginia. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1979 by James Murray Howard (University of Illinois), Project Supervisor; Donna White, Project historian; and Student Architects James Barrett Garrison (Carnegie-Mellon University) and Keith Edward Soto (University of Florida). The photographs were taken by Walter Smalling, Jr., Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service Photographer.